REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected the claims based on Laverty in view of Weisgerber. As will be further discussed below, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections.

In Applicant's invention, with reference to Figure 1, at least two intake linings 27, 28 are disposed on a radially internal end 18 of a stationary guide vane 16. The at least two intake linings are configured as honeycomb structures and are disposed opposite at least two seal projections 25, 26 disposed on a rotor 12.

Applicant respectfully submits that Laverty does not disclose two intake linings on a radially internal end of a stationary guide vane that are disposed opposite at least two seal projections disposed on a rotor. Applicant respectfully notes that the Examiner has not particularly indicated what structures he considers to disclose these ***two intake linings***. Further, since the Examiner argues that structure 36 of Laverty on the radially internal end 26 of the stationary guide vane 24 discloses the ***additionally claimed*** recirculation structure, there is ***no other structure*** on the inner shroud 26 of the stator vane 24 that ***could disclose the claimed two intake linings***. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Laverty does not disclose Applicant's claimed two intake linings and additionally, therefore, cannot disclose two intake linings disposed opposite the two interpreted seal projections 32 of the rotor. At most, all that Laverty discloses, as interpreted by the Examiner, is two seal projections 32 on a rotor ***and*** a recirculation structure 36 on a radially internal end 26 of a stationary guide vane. There is no disclosure for Applicant's additionally claimed two intake linings on the radially internal end of the stationary guide vane and disposed opposite at least two seal projections disposed on a rotor. Laverty does not disclose this structure ***because*** Laverty discloses a ***labyrinth seal*** (col. 3, lines 11-14) and ***labyrinth seals do not have intake linings***. In contrast, as disclosed in Laverty, labyrinth seals 28 include smooth, closed, sealing surfaces 34 which cooperate with sealing projections 32. Consequently, these are contactless labyrinths with corresponding gaps. For leakage reduction, additional flow turning means 36 are provided. Col. 3, lines 15-21. Therefore,

Applicant respectfully submits that Laverty's labyrinth seal does not include two intake linings, as claimed by Applicant, and as such, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 9 and 17 are allowable for at least this reason.

Further in the Office Action, the Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to modify the apparatus of Fig. 4 of Laverty by using the honeycomb intake linings positioned opposite inclined seal projections of Weisgerber in Laverty. Applicant respectfully submits that if the honeycomb structures positioned opposite seal projections of Weisgerber were included in Laverty it would change the principal of operation of the ***labyrinth seal*** of Laverty, which is impermissible. Weisgerber's structure would preclude the flow produced in Laverty by Laverty's disclosed labyrinth seal, as particularly disclosed in Laverty at col. 3, lines 32-56. Weisgerber particularly discloses that honeycomb block 226, which is engaged by seal teeth 228, prevents a reverse circulation air flow pattern. Col. 7, lines 30-40. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that it is impermissible to attempt to modify Laverty's labyrinth seal, which operates on the principle of a reverse flow in the seal, by Weisgerber's honeycomb seal that prevents a reverse flow. In contrast to the Examiner's motivation argument, this attempted modification would not "increas[e] sealing effectiveness" in Laverty, but rather, would render Laverty unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

Further, if the Examiner is merely using Weisgerber for the purpose of disclosing honeycomb structures, and not the further relationship between the honeycomb structures and the seal teeth of Weisgerber, then as discussed above, Laverty does not disclose Applicant's claimed intake linings, and as such, Laverty discloses no intake linings that can be modified by Weisgerber's honeycomb structures.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 9 and 17 are allowable over the cited references for at least this additional reason.

Further in this Amendment, Applicant has amended the claims to obviate the Examiner's objections based on informalities.

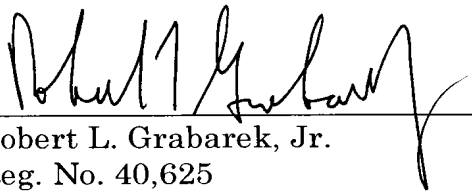
Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or this

application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

As provided for above, this paper includes a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 011235.57478US).

Respectfully submitted,

CROWELL & MORING LLP

Dated: January 28, 2011 By 

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